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SUBJECT: CHILE-CALIFORNIA PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENTS, LOOKS FORWARD

11. (U) SUMMARY: A California delegation traveled to Chile September 27-29 to recognize the achievements of the Chile-California Partnership and explore more opportunities for engagement. Led by Secretaries of State Dale Bonner and Mike Chrisman, the delegation met with Chilean counterparts to discuss energy, agriculture, and education. The California and Los Angeles Chambers of Commerce signed an MOU with the American Chamber of Commerce Chile to promote increased trade and investment. Many events attracted high-level participation, including Foreign Minister Fernandez's attendance at a reception hosted by the Ambassador on September 28. END SUMMARY.

Chile-California: Shared History, Common Interests

12. President Bachelet and California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger formalized the Chile-California Partnership in June 12008. The Partnership features 11 memoranda of understanding/framework agreements on human capital, promoting innovation, energy, environment, agriculture and education. Chile and California implemented a similar program in the 1960s that resulted in the education of hundreds of Chilean students in California. In fact, the "Davis Boys," Chilean graduates of UC Davis, are widely recognized for making a significant impact on Chile's agricultural practices.

13. Under the current Chile-California Partnership, action plans have been developed in viticulture, seed research, environmental protection, and clean energy. Seminars have been held on topics such as solar power, biotechnology, and organic agriculture. The Partnership includes universities, the private sector, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), and Chile's National Commission for the Environment (CONAMA).

14. A California delegation traveled to Chile September 27-29 to review the Partnership and participate in the American Competitiveness Forum (ACF). Dale Bonner, Secretary of Business, Transportation, and Housing, and Mike Chrisman, Secretary for Natural Resources, led the delegation, which also included representatives from the CalEPA and the California and Los Angeles Chambers of Commerce.

15. The visit provided an opportunity to highlight the Chile-California achievements of the past year and explore more opportunities for engagement. Many Chile-California events attracted high-level participation. The delegation's visit was kicked off by an opening dinner hosted by Acting Foreign Minister Alberto Van Klaveren and attended by Chilean Ambassador to the U.S. Jose Goni. The reception hosted by the Ambassador on September 28 included Foreign Minister Fernandez and Ambassador Goni, as well as a wide range of official, academic, NGO, and business contacts,

which is indicative of the breadth of cooperation under the Chile-California Partnership.

Energy, Agriculture: Key Areas of Cooperation

¶16. Renewable energy is a key component of the partnership. During a meeting with Chile's Economic Development Agency (CORFO) and Renewable Energy Center (REC), delegates addressed the challenges of integrating renewable energy projects into the power grid, as well as financing mechanisms for transmission lines. Rodrigo Garcia from CORFO/REC explained the importance of small hydroelectric projects (run-of-river) and said Chile is exploring biofuels, especially from algae. Chile's Clean Production Council requested more technical cooperation and exchanges with companies in California. Ricardo Martinez from the CalEPA suggested that this could be done under an existing agreement between the California EPA and Chile's Environmental Commission (CONAMA).

¶17. Members of the California delegation also met with representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture. Secretary Chrisman noted that water management and irrigation were issues where California can assist Chile. Officials encouraged UC Davis to pursue joint research centers and activities with Universidad de Chile and Universidad de Concepcion.

Expanding Education Exchanges

¶18. Chile-California participants are pleased with the Partnership's education components. UC Davis representatives reported that Chilean applications for graduate study at UC Davis have tripled from 10 to 30 since the launching of the Chile-California Partnership. Becas Chile, the government's higher education scholarship program, and the Council of Rectors expressed interest in expanding education exchanges to include joint research projects, joint degrees, and greater collaboration in areas such as engineering, education, and science. Participants suggested the use of websites to help lesser-known California universities promote themselves in Chile and encourage English language training for Chilean students. Ricardo Martinez of the CalEPA and Secretary Chrisman both offered to host Chilean students at their respective organizations for internships.

Chambers of Commerce Sign MOU

¶10. On September 29, the California and Los Angeles Chambers of Commerce signed an MOU with the American Chamber of Commerce Chile. The MOU calls for cooperation between the Chambers to promote trade and investment between California and Chile. Carlos Valderamma, Senior Vice President of Global Initiatives for the L.A. Chamber, said this was the first ever MOU signed by both Chambers with an international Chamber of Commerce.

¶11. COMMENT: The Chile-California Partnership is a unique model that leverages geographic and economic similarities between Chile and California to address shared challenges, including energy, the environment, and innovation. The Partnership's breadth is both a strength, since it promotes cooperation across a large range of issues, and weakness, because the Partnership is diffuse. Periodic visits such as this one help energize the Partnership by reviewing the existing cooperation and promoting discussions on additional areas of engagement. Chile's enthusiasm for the partnership was on full display during the visit, and it has committed resources to insure the partnership will continue to deliver benefits to both parties. END COMMENT.

SIMONS